

PROCEDURES FOR STRUCTURAL OBSERVATION

1. Submission of the Inspection and Observation Program

CBC Section 106.3.5 provides that when special inspection or structural observation is required, an Inspection and Observation Program shall be submitted by the architect or engineer of record for approval prior to issuance of the building permit.

Information of the program shall be provided on the forms prescribed by each jurisdiction. The program shall specify the items of work that require special inspection or structural observation, names of the special inspectors and structural observer of record, stages of construction at which structural observation is to occur.

All seismic resisting elements of a structural system shall be included in the scope of structural observation, if structural observation is required by sub-section 1, 2, 3 or 5 of Section 1702. If structural observation is required by sub-section 4 alone, it is up to the engineer or architect of record to designate the structural elements that need to be observed. Nothing should preclude the engineer or architect of record from including non-seismic resisting elements in the scope of structural observation.

The inspection and Observation Program shall be made a part of the approved plans, and be placed in a conspicuous location such as on the first page of the plans or the first page of structural plans. Substitution of special inspectors or the structural observer subsequent to issuance of the permit may be processed as a revision to the approved plans.

2. The “Structural Observer of Record” and persons who perform the structural observation

The individual or firm who is responsible for the structural observation may be called the “Structural Observer of Record” for the project. Per CBC Section 1702, a structural observer of record must meet all the following three conditions:

- a) It must be a person or firm registered in California to practice engineering or architecture
- b) It must have a direct contractual relationship with the owner to provide the structural observation service.
- c) It must be either the engineer or architect of record for the structural design; or another engineer or architect designated by the engineer or architect of record.

The person who actually performs structural observation in the field may be either the Structural Observer of Record, or an engineer or architect under the responsible control of the Structural Observer of Record.

3. Submission of Structural Observation or Special Inspection Reports

The Structural Observer of Record is responsible for submitting the observation report as required by Section 1702. The person who actually performs the observation may fill out a draft report, noting any observed deficiencies. The draft report shall be reviewed, completed, stamped and signed by the Structural Observer of Record who takes the responsibility for the report. Whenever a structural observation is performed by someone other than the Structural Observer of Record, that person's name and professional registration number shall be identified in the report.

Deficiencies observed must be reported in writing to the owner's representative, relevant special inspectors, the contractor and the building official. Whether or not any deficiency is observed, a structural observation report shall be submitted to the building official at each significant construction stage as designated in the Inspection and Observation Program. The jurisdiction's inspection approval at those stages shall not occur before receiving the report.

To facilitate the construction process, an inspector may conditionally approve an inspection based on a draft report prepared by the structural observer in the field, pending the submission of the report stamped and signed by the Structural Observer of Record.